

safe, the “Default on America Act” will wipe out nearly 30,000 law enforcement positions while gutting critical resources to secure the border. Again, Donald Trump told House Republicans to defund law enforcement, and the “Default on America Act,” on cue, does just that.

Put plainly, the House Republicans are hell-bent on default one way or another—either a default on the debt or a default on everything else: on our future, our children, our promise to care for our kids and veterans and law enforcement and first responders. No matter what happens, Republicans are promising real pain for American families.

And what happened just a few hours ago in the wee hours of the morning? Plainly, Speaker MCCARTHY capitulated even further to the hard right. Again, if anything, this revised bill is even more extreme, more radical—a more radical version of the “Default on America Act.” It brings us no closer to avoiding a default on the national debt.

Let me be clear. Democrats cannot and will not allow the Republicans’s “DOA Act” to ever become law. It is DOA, plain and simple. And if Republicans refuse to level with the public about the terrible things their “Default on America Act” will do to them, Democrats will do the work ourselves. We will let America know how bad this is because Republicans are intent on hiding it. They know how unpopular it would be.

In the meantime, Speaker MCCARTHY needs to recognize that all the energy he is putting into passing the “Default on America Act” will be wasted effort. The Speaker should drop the brinksmanship, drop the hostage-taking, come to the table with Democrats, and pass a clean bill to avoid default. Given where the Republican proposal is, that is the only way to go. Time is running out.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. President, on the ERA, tomorrow, the Senate will have a chance to take the next major step on an effort a century in the making: ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment under the Constitution.

The story of American democracy has been an uneven but inexorable march toward greater equality for all people. America’s foundation contains a simple premise: No matter who you are, where you come from, you too deserve equal treatment under the law.

The Senate will have a chance tomorrow to bring our country one step closer toward greater equity by voting on a bipartisan resolution regarding the Equal Rights Amendment. The measure is simple. It will recognize that 38 States have now legitimately ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, meeting the threshold required under the Constitution. It would remove an arbitrary deadline set decades ago that invalidated the ratification that occurred in a few States. The States did the work,

just not in the required time that was imposed on them a very long time ago. I believe the Senate should now remove that obstacle.

And we must act now because the Equal Rights Amendment has never been more necessary than today. To the horror of hundreds of millions of people, women in America have fewer rights today than they did even a year ago. The protections of *Roe v. Wade* are gone thanks to the MAGA majority on the Supreme Court. Over a dozen States have near-total abortion bans, and tens of millions of people have to travel hundreds of miles just to access reproductive care. That is sickening.

We cannot claim that America is a nation of equal justice when half of its citizenry languishes on with fewer rights, less dignity, and limited recourse under the Constitution. That is why the Senate must vote in favor of advancing this ERA resolution tomorrow, so we can bring our Nation one step closer to greater justice, greater equality, and equal rights for all people, regardless of gender.

Thank you to Senators CARDIN and MURKOWSKI for championing this resolution. I look forward to voting in its favor tomorrow.

ELIZABETH DOLE VETERANS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. President, finally, the Senate will take the first procedural vote on legislation to care for our Nation’s veterans, spearheaded by my good friend Senator TESTER, head of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

The Elizabeth Dole Veterans Program Improvement Act of 2023 is the union of a number of important and impactful bills that will strengthen the VA, improve its caregiver program, expand home- and community-based services for vets, and ultimately bestow greater dignity on those who defended our Nation.

The bipartisan veterans bill is precisely the sort of legislation the Senate should be working on to build on our success on the PACT Act last year. This is bipartisan, far-reaching, and will make an enormous difference in the lives of our veterans across the country.

I want to thank Senator TESTER, Senator MORAN, and Members from both sides of the aisle for working on this important veterans package.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in the last several years, Democrats have given many dramatic speeches about our country’s norms and institutions, about the rule of law and the health of democracy. But the sad irony has been this: The same political left that shouted so loudly about norms, institutions, and the rule of law has kept trying to steamroll these principles themselves.

Look at recent events at the State capitol buildings in Tennessee and Montana—angry liberal activists in shoving matches with law enforcement, shouting down proceedings. I myself am on the record as a firm critic of rioters and disrupting legislatures, across the board, no matter who is doing it. Why can’t the left be as consistent?

And look at their side’s growing hostility to the very independence of our judicial branch. A few weeks ago, when one Federal judge issued a ruling with policy outcomes that Democrats didn’t like, they started suggesting that politicians should just openly disobey—just openly disobey—the judge’s rulings.

Those suggestions are toxic and, frankly, anti-American. It was wrong when President Andrew Jackson tried to ignore the Court way back in the 1830s, it was dead wrong when Governor Faubus defied the Court on civil rights in the 1950s, and it is wrong also when today’s Democratic Party brings all of that back.

The attacks on the judiciary don’t stop there. In 2020, our colleague the Democratic leader stood on the very steps of the Supreme Court and threatened Justices by name—by name—with a “whirlwind” of retaliation if they failed to rule the way he wanted.

Then, after top Democrats encouraged mob outrage over a leaked draft opinion, President Biden’s Attorney General failed to enforce clear Federal law and put a stop—a stop—to illegal protests that sought to intimidate the Justices at their private family homes.

Recently, a number of Senate Democrats have gone so far as to propose defunding security needs for the Justices and their families if Chief Justice Roberts doesn’t reorganize internal matters the way Democrats would prefer. So after fanning the flames of violence against an equal branch of government, Democrats now want to defund the Justices’ ability to protect themselves and their families if certain Senators don’t get their way.

They are trying to turn impartial judges into partisan hostages. This is really beyond irresponsible.

And then, of course, there are the desperate and never-ending attempts to smear and defame Justices appointed by Republican Presidents, going back years and decades. Over the last few weeks, two Justices have been particularly subjected to a carousel of character assassination. I am sure it will be another Justice’s turn again before too long. This is simply how the far left treats the rule of law.

Let me just repeat that I have total confidence in Justice Gorsuch, Justice Thomas, and all seven of their distinguished colleagues, no matter who appointed them—no matter who appointed them. Just yesterday, all nine Justices explained in a statement their joint approach to maintaining their high ethical standards. Unlike the activists and elected Democrats trying to